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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/078,347	02/21/2002	Kazumi Anazawa	NIP-256	6088

7590 02/18/2004

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EXAMINER

LISH, PETER J

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1754

DATE MAILED: 02/18/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

AS

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/078,347	ANAZAWA ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Peter J Lish	1754

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 July 2002.
 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-8 and 14 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-4, 7 and 14 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) 5-6 and 8 is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date 4/22/02, 2/21/02.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

Claim 8 is objected to because of the following informalities: Claim 8 states "carrier is designed carry multiple...", which should read "carrier is designed *to* carry multiple...". Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 2 recites the limitation "the" in "the reducing decontamination tank to which said tube is not connected". There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 7, and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tadashi et al. (JP 2000-346988).

Tadashi teaches a process and apparatus for the chemical decontamination of a metal structural material contaminated by a radioactive substance. The process comprises immersing the metal structure into an oxidation tub to perform oxidation treatment, followed by immersing the metal structure into a reducing tub to perform reduction treatment, followed by immersing the metal structure into a wash tub. The oxidation and reduction steps are repeated alternately using the same decontamination reagents, thereby reducing the generation of contaminated reagents. The contaminated reagents are sent to a reprocessing facility wherein they are treated by a decomposition system so that the contaminants may be removed and the reagents may be reused.

Tadashi does not explicitly teach the use of multiple oxidation tubs or multiple reduction tubs, however, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time of invention to use a multitude of tubs, as opposed to immersing the metal structure into the same tub a multitude of times, as doing so is viewed as a duplication of parts, held to be obvious by *In re Harza*, 124 USPQ 378. Regarding the tube for transferring reducing reagent between tanks, the use of multiple tubs in the process of Tadashi et al. would have required such a connection in order to maintain the use of the same decontamination reagents.

Regarding the limitations of a decomposer for decomposing the decontamination agent of highest radiation control value, it is expected that this be the decontamination agent present at the end of the treatment (the most reacted), in the final tank. It would have been obvious to send the decontamination agent of this tank to a decomposer, as it is required in order to reprocess the reagent for reuse, as taught by Tadashi et al.

Regarding claims 4 and 7, the order in which the metal structure is immersed into the oxidation and reduction tanks is a process limitation, which does not limit the apparatus itself.

Regarding claim 14, it would have been obvious to provide a protective barrier or cover between the tanks in order to prevent contamination of the worksite due to dripping and/or accidental spillage.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 5-6 and 8 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure: US 4,690,782.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Peter J Lish whose telephone number is 571-272-1354. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00-6:00 Monday through Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Stanley Silverman can be reached on 571-272-1358. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

PL



STUART L. HENDRICKSON
PRIMARY EXAMINER